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THE PRESENT STATUS OF SOCIOLOGY IN GERMANY. III.

IV.

A SIGN of the relation between socialism and individualism appears in the fact that wherever the former is found, the latter immediately shows itself in force. In Germany, where socialism is advancing toward victory, individualistic tendencies of every sort are more and more vigorous. Fifty years ago, when socialism was not so strong, and had less place in the consciousness of the population, Max Stirner's powerful book, *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* attracted little notice. On the other hand Friedrich Nietzsche has given our own time a violent electric shock. His ideas, much more subtle than Stirner's, quickly appeared in all branches of literature. Our polite letters are full of "blonde beasts," and in social thought individualism again raises its hand obstinately and with confidence of success.

Nietzsche has revived Stirner, and in him he contends with a whole series of social theorems. First anarchy. Nietzsche's own philosophy is neither socialistic nor anarchistic. He knows only the strong, sovereign, self-contained individual. The masses, for whom social philosophy is usually concerned, are for Nietzsche the "much-too-many." They are for the amusement and service of the "superior man" (*Ueberschensch*)—"beyond that let them go to the devil and statistics." His "superior men" are ends unto themselves, not for the "guidance" of the masses. He has no place for an institutionalized aristocracy. Whoever has subdued man so as to become a "superior man" is an aristocrat, and he does not trouble himself about the worm beneath.

No more does Nietzsche teach anarchism in the social sense. On the contrary, his "superior men," his "blonde beasts," are the most rigorous despots. For them alone, the select, there is no law, because they stand above the law. For the masses

"slave morals" must prevail. Stirner teaches anarchism of an individualistic sort, not the communistic anarchism so well known today. His theory is also more objective than Nietzsche's, not merely in its form of presentation, but also in its entire conception. In distinction from Nietzsche's individualism he fastens upon "egoism" as an objective psychical factor, and makes unlimited egoism an objective social postulate.

Anarchism finds Stirner a support, but both he and Nietzsche give aid and comfort to the most recent movement in social philosophy, which is turning from social democracy to social aristocracy. The bent toward aristocracy is supposed to be toward satisfaction of individualistic wishes and inclinations.

There is an anonymous writer¹ who attempts to unite his social instincts with his individualistic inclinations so as to construct an objective social system. The title of the book betrays the author's social instincts. The individual has for him no independent value. He is worth considering and entitled to existence only in so far as he is of service to the whole. Of the era of civilization which his book is to introduce, the author declares: "It recognizes the individual only as an aristocrat, *i. e.*, in so far as he is actually better than the rest by virtue of his personal qualities" (p. 109). These qualities appear only in social services, in work for the people. An aristocrat is therefore only he who performs useful and valuable labors for his nation.

The essential doctrines of this author may be condensed into a few sentences. He recognizes two forces which hold a society—primarily, a nation—together, and make it great; first, industrial force, and, second, procreative force. The latter is the more important. If natural increase of population is so great that there is overcrowding, colonization is necessary and salutary, for among other things war will cease, because national boundaries will come to include more than the territories of the fatherland.

The author's attitude toward private property further shows his way of mediation between socialistic and individualistic

¹ *Volksdienst*. Von einem Socialaristokraten. Berlin und Leipzig, 1893.

tendencies. On the one hand he urges that with private property the "joy of life" begins; on the other hand he recommends the abolition of hereditary rights. The state should be the sole heir of all decedents. Only what one has himself earned he should be allowed to retain for life.

The only possible form of government in his social-aristocratic state is thought by the author to be a republic, for under such a government the most deserving will always be placed at the head of affairs by their grateful fellows. He reduces his social-aristocratic ethics to the following code: 1) Thou shalt labor. 2) No work, no pay! 3) No duty, no right! 4) The sexual command—Thou shalt not sell thy person! We see that the decalogue is here compressed into four articles, of which 2) and 3) are identical, and are not commands but perceived facts. Thus the new ethic has but two commandments and these were in principle familiar to every philistine in the eighteenth century.

Still briefer is the ethic of the anarchist Bruno Wille,¹ for he has none at all. Wille is a *communistic* anarchist, yet he cannot free himself from Nietzsche. He cannot keep from glorifying the individual, although he has society for the most part in mind. In his essential ideas, however, he is dependent upon Eugene Dühring, although he confesses with touching modesty that he has not quite clearly comprehended this thinker's philosophy. We need only to recall a few of Dühring's sentences to show the dependence. For example: "Free socialization can never end in lordship of one over others."² "Force as such is an evil even when it serves righteousness" (p. 270). "If natural political socialization had anywhere been able to develop itself without serious interference from the robber system, the great powers with their weak supports would never have existed" (p. 279).

Bruno Wille starts with an abstract free "man of reason" (*Vernunftmensch*). This assumed being, without hindrance from

¹ *Philosophie der Befreiung durch das reine Mittel*. Beiträge zur Pädagogik des Menschengeschlechts. Berlin, 1894.

² *Cursus der Philosophie*, p. 265.

the "robber system," without "violence, which ought to be used only in behalf of righteousness," begins socialization. Wille assures us that his "man of reason" will never hit upon "a lordship of one over another."

Wille's "free man of reason" is of course one of Nietzsche's "blonde beasts." "The free man of reason is conscienceless" (p. 103). He is selfish, otherwise he would be no "lord" (*Herr*), but a "slave." But all these lordly qualities do not hinder the "free man of reason" from being a very civil member of any society. Wille thinks that in the men of today, particularly in the "free men of reason," "judgment and sympathy are sufficiently developed so that they may be told that it is possible for them to live better in agreement and order than in chaotic strife" (p. 204). If we would only leave people to themselves, after abolition of all violence and removal of all compulsion, they would get along among themselves quite well. There would no longer be any trace of Hobbes' *bellum omnium contra omnes*.

Wille pictures the society of the future somewhat after this fashion. Free competition in the most unrestricted form, and private property remain. To be sure private property amounts to an exclusion on one side, a limitation, and in anarchic society there should be no right of exclusion or limitation. Wille cannot construct a social order without private property and must consequently adopt this trivial contradiction into his system. For the guardianship of this private property a "protective alliance" (*Schutzbündnis*) will be formed which, however, as Wille assures us, will never develop into a sovereign state. It is essentially a "free union" which besides insures to the members the greatest advantages. Moreover the protection will not be secured by forcible means, but by "empirical correction." By this barbarous phrase Wille means, with T. G. Vogt, the improvement of men through public opinion and injurious reactions of their conduct upon themselves. It will thus be "a human society free from *moral* authority and lordship, free from moral demands, from duties, from servile compunctions of conscience" (p. 275).

Nietzsche wants the same, but he will have no such society. He posits all this only for the sovereign individual who is great and solitary and stands beyond all society. Here is the difference between the genial poet philosopher and his poor imitator.

Wille does not see that everything which he drives out—morality, law, force, etc.—he admits again through a rear door. There will be no morality, but in its place there will be “reason seeking and recognizing advantage.” Now the coördination of morality and reason is as old as human thought, yet Wille thinks he is teaching something entirely new. There will be no “force,” no “police,” but the individual will be thrown upon his own reason—that is, whatever opposes the reason of the large majority will undergo “empirical correction” through social indignation. How far removed is regulated punishment by flagellation?

Wille and all his anarchistic sympathizers entirely lack not only logical clearness and precision but the use of sociological methods of thought. They have not grasped the central thought of our science, viz., evolution. If they possessed this thought they could never arrive at the absurd conceit of dissolving society in order to enable men, without any bond of union or regulation of their relations, to pursue their several ways alongside of each other. They would then know that our social order has developed itself on the basis of eternal physical and psychical laws, and that wherever men live together some form of authority and therewith of “force” must be developed.

It cannot be inferred from this thought, to be sure, that our social order neither needs nor is susceptible of improvement, nor that a social reform is equivalent to an assault upon eternal natural laws. By the idea of evolution we are by no means forced to that stupid satisfaction at which Otto Ammon¹ has arrived, who counts himself happy to have been born into “this best of all worlds.”

¹ *Die Gesellschaftsordnung und ihre natürlichen Grundlagen*. Entwurf einer socialen Anthropologie zum Gebrauche für alle Gebildete, die sich mit socialen Fragen befassen. Jena, 1895.

When Ammon speaks of the "natural basis" of social order, he thinks he has found that unalterable law of nature which neither may nor can be shaken. In his social-aristocratic loftiness he misunderstands the socialistic theory when he attributes to it the view that our present social order is "unnatural," or when he makes it disregard the law of evolution. Theoretical socialism stands, foremost of all social theories, on the ground of evolutionary conceptions. To that extent—*i. e.*, in respect of the theory of evolution—Darwinism is no recourse against social-democratic conceptions. Only when it comes to the discussion whether the Darwinian doctrine of selection is compatible with the socialistic doctrine of equality can Ammon assert that the theory of selection points clearly to an aristocracy. If only those individuals survive that are strong and best fitted for the conditions of life, while the weak are destroyed in the struggle for existence, there is little room for the idea that equality is to be attributed to all individuals. Nature does not treat all alike; she makes strict and severe selections.

But the consequence that Ammon draws by no means follows, *viz.*, that the social system of today with its abrupt class distinctions is essentially without need of improvement, and that improvements in the sense of social reform are impossible. Ammon repeats the old blunder, which social theorists have frequently committed, of taking a natural law—not to say a mere hypothesis—bodily over into social theory. We may think what we please about the metaphysical question of the freedom of the will; a certain conscious teleology, in the individual and social psychological sense, cannot be denied. It at least constitutes a recourse, which must not be undervalued, against the decisive application of a blind natural law to social life. Moreover, the whole of practical physics is nothing but the conquest of natural laws by natural laws. Why shall it not be possible in social life, assuming the validity of the law of selection here also, to modify its operation by the force of other laws?

Ammon constructs, after the model of Galton, a so-called "curve of intelligence," and hereupon a "curve of welfare," both

according to the same scheme, and he is highly gratified to find that they correspond. The conclusion is—the higher classes are also of higher intelligence. And now he wishes—out of pure pity for the lower classes—that they should remain at their present level, without offering to the more capable among them opportunity and help to work themselves up to a higher level. “For,” says he, “if the best talents are constantly withdrawn from the lower class and added to the higher, the lower class will represent only the *soil* from which the most valuable components are drained away” (p. 65).

A consistent Darwinist must arrive at the conclusion that separation of classes is an evil. Since the lower classes are actually on a lower intellectual level—to show this the elaborate apparatus which Ammon employs is surely superfluous—it is a demand of social interest that there should be a crossing of classes, in order that somehow a better sort of men should result. Ammon, on the other hand, is enamored of class divisions because they prevent intermixture.

Again he finds another justification of class barriers in the superior opportunities thus secured to the higher classes for the nurture and education of their children, a condition of things conducive to the development of highly talented individuals. For the lower classes it has the advantage that it rouses and encourages their emulation. Ammon calculates with mathematical exactness the probability that a man will find a wife who is his intellectual equal. The wider the room for choice the smaller the probability, and therewith the diminished probability, of mentally well-endowed descendants. He comes to this conclusion: “There is a provision of nature by which it comes about that two individuals who are adapted to each other are oftener united than would occur according to the law of probability. The provision in question is the *separation of the higher classes from the great mass of the population*” (p. 89). I imagine that an experienced anthropologist would oppose to this theory the fact that degeneracy in the higher, and especially in the highest, classes is today alarmingly advanced, and is still progressing. He

might also assign as the cause constant intermarriage within restricted groups.

Ammon might have learned from Galton that the intellectual aristocracy does not perpetuate itself through many generations. That the social aristocracy remains so long in control is perhaps due rather to the slowness of social development than to a "fortunate" natural law. At all events it is impossible to join in the naïve optimism of Ammon: "We have found reason for the assumption that in most cases the right man comes to the fitting place, and to the right place comes the fitting man" (p. 179). The world is as yet far from such harmony and will doubtless long remain so.

In one respect I fully agree with Ammon, namely, in the demand that chairs of ethnology, anthropology, and sociology should be founded in the German universities (*Hochschulen*). These disciplines are in point of fact sadly neglected. There are no special chairs of sociology, and in only a few universities are there even docents who treat this discipline more or less exclusively. So far as I know there are, in Berlin, Georg Simmel, in Freiburg, E. Grosse, and in Leipsic, Paul Barth.

Simmel has an audience that is increasing in numbers each semester. For several years he has read in the summer semester on social psychology, and in the winter semester a special course on sociology. Everyone who knows his *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaften* will guess that in his lectures on ethics he introduces and suggests many sociological ideas and points of view. Besides this he conducts a seminar for sociological practice. Here reports are made on sociological books and independent dissertations are read. Simmel himself usually conducts the discussions. This is for the moment very agreeable to the listeners, but it is pedagogically by no means advantageous. A seminar is solely for the purpose of accustoming the members to independent work through their own elaborations of subjects, and especially through active participation in

discussion. If the members only hear the words of the teacher the seminar fails to fulfill its mission.

In Freiburg, as I am privately informed, Herr Grosse reads partly on sociology in general, and partly on special sociological problems, such as "The Origin of the Family," "The Sociology of Art," "The Forms of Ethical Conception," etc. In addition he conducts seminar studies in ethnology. The attendance is considerable, in proportion to the total number at the University.

Herr Barth, in Leipsic, understands by sociology, as he kindly informs me in a private letter, the philosophy of history. This is the "dynamics" of which "statics" is only a special case. He reads there before a moderate number of hearers, on the philosophy of history, but conducts no seminar.

How the case may be in the two last mentioned universities, I cannot say, because I am not directly acquainted with them. In Berlin, however, I have observed a continual growth of interest in sociology among the students. Three or four years ago a sociological course was attended by four or five students. Today about one hundred attend the sociological lectures. It appears, then, that it rests with the lecture and the lecturer to rouse in students an interest in any science.¹

DR. O. THON.

BERLIN, GERMANY.

¹ Translated by ALBION W. SMALL.